Numb. CXXIII.

The GUARDIAN.

—————hic murus aheneus eſto,
Nil conſcire ſibi—————— Hor.

Saturday, Auguſt 1. 1713.

THERE are a ſort of Knights-Errant in the World, who, quite contrary to thoſe in Romance, are perpetually ſeeking Adventures to bring Virgins into Diſtreſs, and to ruin Innocence. When Men of Rank and Figure paſs away their Lives in theſe Criminal Purſuits and Practices, they ought to conſider that they render themſelves more Vile and Deſpicable than any Innocent Man can be, whatever low Station his Fortune or Birth have placed him in. Title and Anceſtry render a good Man more illuſtrious, but an ill one more contemptible.

Thy Father's Merit ſets thee up to view,
And plants thee in the faireſt point of Light,
To make thy Virtues or thy Faults Conſpicuous.
Cato.

I have often wondered, that theſe Deflowrers of Innocence, tho' Dead to all the Sentiments of Virtue and Honour, are not reſtrained by Compaſſion and Humanity. To bring Sorrow, Confuſion and Infamy into a Family, to wound the Heart of a tender Parent, and ſtain the Life of a poor deluded young Woman with a Diſhonour that can never be wiped off, are Circumſtances one would think ſufficient to check the moſt violent Paſſion in a Heart which has the leaſt Tincture of Pity and Good-nature. Wou'd any one purchaſe the Gratification of a Moment at ſo dear a Rate? and entail a laſting Miſery on others, for ſuch a tranſient Satiſfaction to himſelf? nay, for a Satiſfaction that is ſure, at ſome time or other, to be followed with Remorſe? I am led to this Subject by two Letters which came lately to my Hands. The laſt of them is, it ſeems, the Copy of one ſent by a Mother to one who had abuſed her Daughter; and though I cannot juſtifie her Sentiments at the latter end of it, they are ſuch as might ariſe in a Mind which had not yet recovered its Temper after ſo great a Provocation. I preſent the Reader with it as I received it, becauſe I think it gives a lively Idea of the Affliction which a fond Parent ſuffers on ſuch an Occaſion.

SIR, —ſhire, July, 1713.

'THE other Day I went into the Houſe of one of my Tenants, whoſe Wife was formerly a Servant in our Family, and (by my Grandmother's Kindneſs) had her Education with my Mother from her Infancy; ſo that ſhe is of a Spirit and Underſtanding greatly ſuperior to thoſe of her own Rank. I found the poor Woman in the utmoſt Diſorder of Mind and Attire, drowned in Tears, and reduced to a Condition that looked rather like Stupidity than Grief. She leaned upon her Arm over a Table, on which lay a Letter folded up and directed to a certain Nobleman, very famous in our Parts for low Intrigue, or (in plainer Words) for Debauching Country Girls; in which number is the unfortunate Daughter of my poor Tenant, as I learn from the following Letter written by her Mother. I have ſent you here a Copy of it, which, made Publick in your Paper, may perhaps furniſh uſeful Reflections to many Men of Figure and Quality, who indulge themſelves in a Paſſion which they poſſeſs but in Common with the vileſt part of Mankind.

My Lord,

"LAST Night I diſcovered the Injury you have done to my Daughter. Heaven knows how long and piercing a Torment that ſhor-

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“ ſhort-lived ſhameful Pleaſure of yours muſt bring upon me; upon me, from whom you never received any Offence. This Conſideration alone ſhould have deterred a Noble Mind from ſo baſe and ungenerous an Act. But, alas! what is all the Grief that ſhall be my Share, in compariſon of that, with which you have requited her by whom you have been obliged? Loſs of good Name, Anguiſh of Heart, Shame and Infamy, are what muſt inevitably fall upon her, unleſs ſhe gets over them by what is much worſe, open Impudence, profeſſed Lewdneſs, and abandoned Proſtitution. Theſe are the Returns you have made to her, for putting in your Power all her Livelihood and Dependance, her Virtue and Reputation. O, my Lord, ſhould my Son have practiſed the like on one of your Daughters! —— I know you ſwell with Indignation at the very Mention of it, and would think he deſerved a thouſand Deaths, ſhould he make ſuch an Attempt upon the Honour of your Family. 'Tis well, my Lord. And is then the Honour of your Daughter, whom ſtill, though it had been violated, you might have maintained in Plenty, and even Luxury, of greater moment to her, than to my Daughter hers, whoſe only Suſtenance it was? And muſt my Son, void of all the Advantages of a generous Education, muſt he, I ſay, conſider? And may your Lordſhip be excuſed from all Reflection? Eternal Contumely attend that guilty Title which claims Exemption from Thought, and arrogates to its Wearers the Prerogative of Brutes. Ever curſed be its falſe Luſtre, which could dazzle my poor Daughter to her Undoing. Was it for this, that the exalted Merits, and godlike Virtues of your great Anceſtor were honoured with a Coronet, that it might be a Pander to his Poſterity, and confer a Priviledge of Diſhonouring the Innocent and Defenceleſs? At this rate the Laws of Rewards ſhould be inverted, and he who is Generous and Good ſhould be made a Beggar and a Slave, that Induſtry and honeſt Diligence may keep his Poſterity unſpotted, and preſerve them from ruining Virgins, and making whole Families unhappy. Wretchedneſs is now become my Everlaſting Portion! Your Crime, my Lord, will draw Perdition even upon my Head. I may not Sue for Forgiveneſs of my own Failings and Miſdeeds, for I never can forgive yours; but ſhall curſe you with my dying Breath, and at the laſt tremendous Day ſhall hold forth in my Arms my much-wronged Child, and call aloud for Vengeance on her Defiler. Under theſe preſent Horrors of Mind I could be content to be your chief Tormentor, ever paying you mock-Reverence, and ſounding in your Ears, to your unutterable loathing, the empty Title which inſpired you with Preſumption to tempt, and over-awed my Daughter to comply.

“ Thus have I given ſome Vent to my Sorrow; nor fear I to awaken you to Repentance, ſo that your Sin may be forgiven: The Divine Laws have been broken, but much Injury, irreparable Injury, has been alſo done to me, and the juſt Judge will not pardon that till I do.

My Lord,

Your Conſcience will help you to my Name.

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